

## REMARKS

Claims 1-17 remain in the application. The sole independent Claim (1) has been amended, however. Support for the amended Claim 1 will be found at page 9, line 23 to page 10, line 2 of the specification, as well as Examples 1-3.

Claims 1-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over the Nakagawa et al. (U.S.) reference. Claims 1-11, 16 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over the Nakagawa et al. EP reference. Claim 12 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Nakagawa et al. in view of Nakagawa et al. (EP '954). For the reasons hereinafter recited, applicant respectfully submits that Claims 1-17, as amended, overcome these rejections.

Nakagawa et al. (U.S.), discloses the use of a radical capping agent as a polymerization initiator at the time of monomer polymerization. In this regard, see column 7, lines 56 to 60 of Nakagawa et al. which recite:

The above radical capping agent is used in combination with a radical donor. It is suspected that as the reaction product of such a radical capping agent with a radical donor functions as a polymerization initiator, polymerization of an addition polymerizable monomer proceeds.

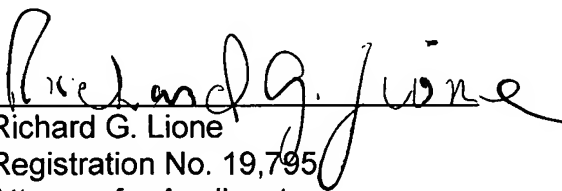
Therefore, this reference only discloses the method and the usage of radical capping for producing the main chain of the vinyl polymer before carbon-carbon double bond is introduced.

The process of Claim 1, on the other hand, is effective to stabilize and to suppress further reaction of the carbon-carbon double bond by the presence of stable free radical together with the vinyl polymer terminated with a group having a polymerizable carbon-carbon double bond. The stable free radical suppresses further reaction of the double bond and suppresses deterioration, i.e. increase in viscosity and gelatification, thereby contributing to the production of stable high quality vinyl polymer terminated with a group having a polymerizable carbon-carbon double bond. The stable free radical of the present invention exerts such effects even under hypoxic or low oxygen atmosphere (for low oxygen atmosphere discussion, please refer to line 6 to 24 on page 6 of the specification). In contrast, neither Nakagawa et al. (U.S.) nor

Nakagawa et al. (EP '954) describe any method for producing vinyl polymers with terminal carbon-carbon double bonds in the presence of a "stable free radical".

It will thus be seen that amended Claim 1 is neither anticipated nor suggested by either of the Nakagawa et al. references. Accordingly, independent Claim 1 and each of dependent Claims 2-17 should be in allowable form. Passage of the application to issue is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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